

Whose Orders?

Years ago I read notice of a horrible train wreck in which many people died painfully amid the twisted burning wreckage. The engineer was killed as well. But as he lay near death he showed those nearby a paper, saying, "Take this. It will show I was given the wrong orders." And, they were the wrong orders. He had been on the wrong track, yet he was still dying, along with many others.

Friend, you have an eternal soul. What orders are you following: God's, or man's idea of religion? Make sure, because sincerity is not enough!

- by Bob Hines

Why I Go to Every Service of the Church

a.. I Go To Every Service Of The Church Because I Am Made Stronger. Power is given in worship to live a nobler life (Acts 20:32). There is the sweetest fellowship on earth. Why should I want to miss ANY service?

b.. I Go To Every Service Of The Church Because God Wants The Church To Grow (cf. Acts 2:47; 4:4). The church always grows when members put God first by loyal attendance. Here is a way all can help in the finest work on earth.

c.. I Go To Every Service Of The Church To Set A Good Example. Many look my way and follow in my steps (Matthew 5:14-16). Influence is either good or bad. Any hour the church meets, my influence is with or against Christ.

d.. I Go To Every Service Of The Church To Prove My Love And Gratitude. One who truly loves God does not ask if he must attend all services. His love compels him to! If I show love to God by attendance, I show lack of love by absence (Matthew 22:37-39).

e.. I Go To Every Service Of The Church To Obey God. The Bible says, "forsake not the assembling of yourselves together" (Hebrews 10:25). Any service where the Bible is taught, prayer is made, and God is worshipped, is good, and "to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him it is sin" (James 4:17). If it is good to be present for all services, it is bad to be absent from any.

f.. I Go To Every Service Of The Church To Put First Things First. "Seek ye FIRST his kingdom" (Matthew 6:33). Jesus said the church must be first to the Christian, even before seeking food, clothing or drink.

g.. I Go To Every Service Of The Church Because It Is Safe To Do So. All who forsake an assembly wonder if they sin, but I know I am safe in attending EVERY service (Romans 14:21-23).

h.. I Go To Every Service Of The Church To Abound In The Lord's Work (1 Corinthians 15:58). A true Christian wants to do ALL he can and not as LITTLE as he can. Since the assemblies of the church are vital, I must abound in attendance.

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I'll See You In Bible Class . . .

Because I want more than anything to know the Lord.

"With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! (Ps. 119:10)

Because I need the spiritual resources to do right.

"I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. (Ps. 119:11)

Because I must find my way through this passing world.

"I am a sojourner on the earth; hide not your commandments from me! ... Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (Ps. 119.19,105)

Because I long for strength to cope with life.

"My soul melts away for sorrow; strengthen me according to your word!" (Ps. 119.28)

Because I need to refocus on things that matter.

"Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways." (Ps. 119.37)

Because I hope in the precious promises of God.

"This is my comfort in my affliction, that your promise gives me life... Keep steady my steps according to your promise, and let no iniquity get dominion over me." (Ps. 119.50, 133)

Because I am blessed by the company of my spiritual family.

"I am companion of all who fear you, of those who keep your precepts." (Ps. 119.63)

Because I want to encourage others who care.

"Those who fear you will see me and rejoice, because I have hoped in our word." (Ps. 119.74)

Because I must be prepared to serve.

"I am your servant; give me understanding, that I may know your testimonies!" (Ps. 119.125)

Because I value the security of the Lord's guidance.

"Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble." (Ps. 119.165)

- by Bill McFarland

The Challenges of Prosperity

No one can dispute that we live in the most prosperous time in history. In fact, ours is the most prosperous nation in the world and we are the most materially blessed people of all time. No other group of people - living or dead - has ever enjoyed the advantages we possess. Lesson one: be thankful!

The problem, of course, is that these blessings of money, material possessions, leisure time, and personal liberties will become our spiritual downfall. Consider some of the challenges that are presented by our prosperity:

a. It is easy to become consumed by the ambition to obtain more and more. Solomon, perhaps the richest man in the history of the world, wrote: "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity" (Eccl. 5:10). With abundance comes an increased appetite for even more.

b. This desire for more worldly goods presents a whole new array of temptations. Paul warned that "those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil . . ." (1 Tim. 6:9,10). Our news is filled with reports of corruption at the highest levels of government and business. The underlying cause is the "love of money." And, note that you don't have to be rich to suffer these temptations - you only have to "want to get rich." Many have suffered the "ruin and destruction" - both physical and spiritual - of such desire.

c. As the pursuit of riches and possessions continues, men invariably allow God to be crowded out of their lives. Many a Christian has neglected his spiritual duties while salving his conscience with the excuse: "I must earn a living." God, on the other hand, has promised that if we put His kingdom first, "all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6.33). May we all have the faith to trust Him in this way.

- by Greg Gwin